

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-01

CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-03 SAM-01 SAB-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01

EUR-12 ACDA-05 /082 W

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O 051810Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4378

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 5593

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL EG

SUBJECT: SUEZ CANAL REOPENING

1. HAVE JUST RETURNED (2100 LOCAL) FROM ALL DAY TRIP TO SUEZ CANAL AREA TO ATTEND CANAL REOPENING. IN BRIEF, DIGNIFIED CEREMONY IN FLAG-BEDECKED, CARNIVAL MOOD PORT SAID, PRESIDENT SADAT AT 1100 LOCAL FORMALLY SIGNED DOCUMENT TURNING OVER THE CANAL TO SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY WITH EGYPTIAN ARMED FORCES RETAINING RESPONSIBILITY PROTECT IT AGAINST AGGRESSION. SADAT, CROWN PRINCE OF IRAN, SAUDI PRINCE SULTAN, EGYPTIAN CABINET AND OTHER VIPS THEN BOARDED VESSELS FOR SIX HOUR TRANSIT FROM PORT SAID TO ISMAILIA, WHERE CONVOY STOPPED AND GUESTS DEBARKED AND DEPARTED.

2. CONVOY HEADED BY AN EGYPTIAN DESTROYER, WITH SADAT ABOARD, FOLLOWED BY PRESIDENTIAL YACHT MAHROUSA, USS LITTLE ROCK AND TWO EGYPTIAN MOTOR VESSELS FOR VISITING DIGNITARIES. TRANSIT SMOOTH AND UNEVENTFUL EXCEPT FOR MUCH CHEERING BY SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS ALONG BANKS.

3. TO MOST, BIGGEST SURPRISE OF THE SHOW WAS THE APPEARANCE OF
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USS LITTLE ROCK AT PORT SAID EARLY THIS MORNING AND PROMINENT

PLACE SHE WAS GIVEN IN THE CONVOY. GOE HAD MADE NO RPT NO ANNOUNCEMENT THAT LITTLE ROCK WOULD BE IN CONVOY AND SOVIET PARTICIPANTS, ESPECIALLY NAVAL, CLEARLY UPSET AND COMPLAINING THEY WERE UPSTAGED. PREDICTABLY UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE LITTLE ROCK GENERATED BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS FROM AMERICAN AND EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS AS WELL AS DIPLOMATIC CORPS. I RESPONDED TO ALL SUCH QUESTIONS THAT GOE HAD REQUESTED US TO SEND THE SHIP TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CEREMONY, BUT THAT IT WAS GOE RESPONSIBITLY TO ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF OPENING CEREMONY. WHEN ASKED WHY WE DID NOT ANNOUNCE IT, I SAID WE DO NOT NORMALLY ANNOUNCE OPERATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF OUR NAVAL VESSELS. (TO AVOID GETTING BRITISH NOSES OUT OF JOINT, I TOLD UK AMBASSADOR ADAMS LAST NIGHT IN STRICT CONFIDENCE ABOUT GOE REQUEST AND OUR RESPONSE.)

4. SADAT, AT OPENING OF CEREMONY, SHOOK HANDS WITH HEADS OF FOREIGN NAVAL CONTINGENTS WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN MINE CLEARANCE OPERATION, INCLUDING ADMIRALS TURNER AND CARROLL.

5. TONIGHT CAIRO IS ALSO CELEBRATING THE EVENT WITH FIREWORKS, FESTOONED BUILDINGS, ETC... OPENING OF CANAL IS CLEARLY GREAT PSYCHOLOGICAL BOAST FOR EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AND THEY ARE ENJOYING IT. WILL SUBMIT DETAILED REPORT WHEN WE HAVE BEEN ABLE COLLECT AND COLLATE IMPRESSIONS OF VARIOUS US PARTICIPANTS. EILTS

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